

Tim Bozik
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Montana Historical Society
Montana Brewery Oral History Project
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Brian Shovers: This is Brian Shovers. Today I'm interviewing Tim Bozik.

Tim Bozik: Bozik.

BS: Bozik, of Bitter Root Brewing, down in Hamilton. The date is June 21, 2017. The first question I have for you is what sparked your interest in brewing beer?

TB: I like beer. [laughter] Short and sweet. [laughter] I like beer. I'm a manufacturer.

BS: You started as a homebrewer?

TB: Nope.

BS: No.

TB: No. No. I manufacture. I like beer. I like to cook. I knew the process. There was a need [unintelligible] twenty-one years ago. My kids were young. There was no place you could really go, aside from Pizza Hut, and you know, have a beer and bring the kids and maybe get a bite to eat.

BS: Right. Where did you come from?

TB: From Phoenix, Arizona.

BS: All right. When you came here, did you have an idea for a brewery or that came later?

TB: I had been looking at it; the business for a number of years. I had an interest in it. When I came here, I had a ... that was not my plan. I'm gonna go to Hamilton and run a brewery, but it was certainly a possibility.

BS: What you can tell me about Montana's first microbreweries? Were you involved in those?

TB: You know, I When I started, it was obviously early in the ... I think there were about ten.

BS: What year was that?

TB: I started in '97. Licensed in '98.

BS: Right.

TB: I started doing the research and poking around. Of course, Big Sky [Brewing] They were in the 2500-barrel range at that time. Bayern [Brewing]. I actually didn't meet Jürgen [Knöller] until when I was into the process. Tim O'Leary, of course. He was He Tim and O'Leary had started to break down the KettleHouse You-Brew scenario. Tim was doing Beargrass Brewing -- Tim O'Leary. John and Sandy [Campbell] that had Lang [Creek Brewery], up in Marion. Super nice folks. There was, of course, the Great Northern Brewery in Whitefish. It was also new. They were all really new. Just trying to think of what other ones off the top of my head. A bunch of us started right within a year or so of each other. Of

course, Jürgen was here. Big Sky was here. Yeah, it's great group of folks. You know, it's a great mindset. Everyone works together, you know. It's beer. You can relax, you know.

BS: Are there any other micros in Hamilton?

TB: There are now. We've got six in the Bitterroot Valley ...

BS: Wow!

TB: ... now. Higherground [Brewing] right here, a couple blocks away. Doing a good job. Of course, we've got Bandit [Brewing] down in Darby. Doing a good job. Blacksmith [Brewing Company], Wildwood [Brewing], Lolo [Peak Brewing Company]. I think that's all of them. This week.

BS: What are the costs to set up the brewery?

TB: You know, I could just throw out a number, but I didn't have a lot of money. I visited a lot of breweries that ... what we now refer to as a Frankenstein brewery, where you take parts and pieces from different industries and put 'em together. That's what we did. I had kettle built and then I built the mash tun. I found ... it from an old dairy tank. Heat exchanger from a dairy. Fermenters from a dairy. Chillers systems.

BS: Local dairies?

TB: A lot from Meadow Gold there in Missoula. I raided their warehouse, that's right there by Draught Works [Brewery] now. I don't think they're anymore. Raided them a lot. Dairies in Oregon and around the Northwest. I kinda traveled around looking for parts and pieces.

BS: Sounds like that's sorta typical. I've done a number of these interviews. It seems like a number of people started out with dairy equipment.

TB: Yeah. Back then, I mean, that was kinda the ... there weren't a whole lot of manufacturers brewery-specific for this size.

BS: How many barrels do you do?

TB: First full year, we did 700. We'll do pretty close to 5,000 this year. We haven't taken the big production route that Tim at KettleHouse [Brewing Company] or Big Sky, you know. I mean, our location ... I mean, we've stayed more of that boutique. We've always packaged. We've always been a packaging brewery from the very beginning. When we started, you couldn't sell a pint of beer. You could fill growlers.

BS: Yeah, it was '99 that law changed.

TB: Yep. Yeah.

BS: Was ... let's see, how did you go about branding the beer?

TB: I'm kinda traditional guy. I looked at a lot of traditional type logos. I actually went to the museum here and went through old stuff. In particular, found a produce can. It was actually pumpkins. I really liked the font of the Bitterroot on it. We used that. I've seen that font many times since then on the old apple crates, cherry crates, and beets. That was pretty cool. We used that style for the initial local artist, Bobbi Dye.

BS: Is it out there?

TB: Yes, well that's modified. That's the stylized logo. Somewhere around here I've got an envelope with, actually, all the original drawings. Then, at some point, I did that, looking for something simpler and a single color 'cause, of course, the first one was all full-colored. That's it right there.

BS: 'Kay. Right.

TB: Local artist that did that for us. She's still with us.

BS: Really?

TB: Twenty years later. Still does all of our labels.

BS: What's her name?

TB: Bobbi Dye. Bobbi Dye. Local girl. Yeah, just stuck with that. I didn't wanna get into the name game. I figure the Big Sky guys, they nailed that down pretty quick. They do a great job with it. Now, of course, we've started doin' some of that. I've always stayed with a traditional style, as I was, you know, it's a porter, it's a nut brown, it's a IPA.

BS: Is there any one that seems to win out over the others?

TB: Style wise?

BS: Yeah.

TB: Yeah, absolutely. I mean the pales are the hot ticket these days.

BS: IPA?

TB: IPA. pales of all styles. IPA. Our biggest seller is a single hop. It's a single hop, single malt beer. Difficult style to use one malt and one hop to do the whole thing. Pretty proud of it. It outsells everything else in a pretty big way.

BS: What's it called?

TB: Single Hop. Short and simple. Just what it is. It's what they refer to as a smash beer -- single hop and single malt.

BS: A lot of the other ales and such would be multiple kinds of hops?

TB: Yeah, generally speaking. I mean, you're gonna use some hops for bittering and some hops for flavor and some hops for aroma. The same with the malts. Different malts [unintelligible] sweetness and color.

BS: Was distribution an issue?

TB: The distribution didn't turn out to be what the expectations I was ... that were presented to me initially. You know, talking to some distributors and talking with some retailers, it was like, "Oh yeah sure, no problem. Oh yeah, it's gonna be great! It's gonna be huge!" [laughter] That was way more of a challenge than we anticipated, but little by little. You know, in order to get a tap handle, in a bar or a restaurant, someone's gotta loose one. That's really, you know, that's the big bottom line. That was told to me early on by somebody much wiser than me.

BS: Unless you're The Rhino bar in Missoula. I interviewed him, he's got like, I think fifty taps.

TB: And even there. And even there. I did a lot of events with Brad [Martens] up there.

BS: Right.

TB: Yeah, and Keven [Head], years ago. Great guys, but even there, it's like, you know, you got a lot of good beers on tap, so what should I take off? That's a question that I get asked a lot. Also, back then, there were fewer handles. I mean, there just were. Now, with all the micros and retailers really getting on board and embracing it, I mean, it wasn't really happening like that then.

BS: Okay.

TB: You know, they have five handles, four handles, three handles. I mean, if somebody had ten, that was a lot. Fifty was, like, I mean, that's what made The Rhino, you know, the mecca that it is for beer. It was very challenging. Very challenging.

BS: Did you get pushback from the tavern keepers?

TB: No, not really. I mean, they're, you know, partners in the industry. Naturally, they want to protect their business.

BS: 'Specially the quota system.

TB: Yeah.

BS: And liquor licenses.

TB: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

BS: I was told, maybe it was Bjorn [Nabozney] at Big Sky, that if you were to try to buy a license, I think he said like Missoula or Bozeman, it would be anywhere from \$600,000 to a million dollars.

TB: Could be, if Bjorn said it.

BS: At that rate.

TB: Could be, these days. Yeah, yeah. Absolutely. And we're not allowed.

BS: Really.

TB: We're not allowed. You know, they're not allowed to buy a brewer's license. We're not allowed to buy a beverage license. You know, also I think, during that time, a lot of it was going on in the retail business, was the, you know, the awareness of excessive consumption of alcohol and there's people out there now. People getting' pull over and that sorta of thing. There was a decline in people going out and drinking a lot.

BS: 'Kay.

TB: I think might have been Jürgen, back then, he and I having a conversation, and he put out a number. I don't recall. It could have been as high as ... there's been a sixty percent decline in on-premise consumption in the last twenty years.

BS: Really?

TB: He's a super smart guy. He's got a little perspective. Yeah, naturally, you know, that devalues the license. You know, with that old business model, you know, we're gonna sell booze and at the end of it [unintelligible]. That business model was going away. Then when came along and took the smoking away, I mean, it was just terrible for those folks. It was really, really hard. I knew a lot of 'em. I was

friends with a lot of ‘em. We were members of the [Montana] Tavern Association. Yeah, very challenging. Naturally, when they would see these breweries, you know, being successful, it was hard. But again, they’re our partners, you know. If it wasn’t for them, I wouldn’t be in business. That’s very, very important.

BS: What was the source for your I guess you’ve talked about your brewing equipment. Then, where do you get your malt and hops?

TB: We were the first Montana brewer to take ... there’s a new facility built in Great Falls.

BS: Malteurop.

TB: Yep, Malteurop now. It was ... isn’t that terrible I can’t even think of what it was called. Family-owned business out of France at that time. They built that, at the time, I think it was possibly the largest, most technologically advanced malt facility on the planet.

BS: Well it’s still the largest in North America, I know that.

TB: Is it.

BS: Yeah, yeah.

TB: That doesn’t surprise me. Have you been there?

BS: I’ve tried to get tours on several occasions. Finally, through Brian Smith at Blackfoot Brewing, he’s got a connection there. I brought a group called The Society for Industrial Archeology and we’d like to do a process tours.

TB: Nice.

BS: I’m on the schedule now to get a tour.

TB: Nice. The other thing I was going to suggest, they do a thing called Barley Days. They invite all the brewers and that would be a time that you could also get a tour. That’s cool that they’ll give you a Great folks! Of course, we followed their construction and stayed in touch with them. We were the first to get a load of malt from them. They had a custom jacket made for me -- first Montana customer or something like that. That was very cool. Our base malt comes from there. The specialty malts come largely come from the Northwest, but also from the UK and Canada.

Hops, again, pretty much all from the ... pretty much all from the Northwest. We do source local more and more. With the hops, there’s three or four facilities that are becoming commercially viable here in western Montana.

BS: I think there was something here in the Bitterroot?

TB: There is! There is! There is a family in, I think just south of Stevensville. Jason [Goeltz] would know more about this. I don’t know if he’s here or not. They are actually, you know, working on the ... not just working on it, but they’re bringing in a harvester and a pelletizer. I mean, they’re in it. We’ve used some of their hops. One of the beers we’re doing is what we call Local 13. Thirteen being Ravalli County. I use local hops and of course Montana malt and do a pale, you know, basic ale style. Very, very popular. But largely northwest. We grow some hops here. In the fall, for quite a number of years now, we harvest hops from what we’ve grown here and from these local farms and go and pick ‘em and make beer out of ‘em. Which is really fun.

BS: What varieties can we do here?

TB: You know, I don't know that were that limited. I'm sure if you spoke with the farmers, they're gonna talk about ones that are more viable than others, production-wise. I don't know what that is. I think we have here, growing, I think we're growing ... I think we're growing Willamettes and Cascades, just out back here. We just took out the plants that we've had for years and started new ones this year. They're not very big.

BS: During the 1990s, what was the public's perception of microbreweries? From your perspective.

TB: It was interesting 'cause, of course, while I was building this deal, Bitterroot Irrigation District vehicle maintenance building, people'd stop in. One guy, in particular, who's still a customer and a good friend, who says He's in his late-eighties now. He stopped in, fifth generation here, "What're you doin' here?" I said, "I'm buildin' a brewery." "You make some of that dark shit?" [laughter] "Yes, I am." He goes, "You can't sell that shit around here." He poked his head in periodically as we started, you know, he was one of my original taste testers. He's a big IPA fan, now. Just a wonderful guy. There's people like that, that, you know, spread the word.

Then there wasn't anything, I mean, there was not a lot of reason to stop in Hamilton. I mean, Karen [Suennen] didn't even have Spice of Life [Café] yet. I don't know how much you know about them. It was geared to taking care of, you know, Hamilton, Corvallis, you know, any of those People coming from here and there. I mean, you know, a lot of them drove through. We've got great hiking and all of this, but as far, you know, a place to stop and eat. I mean, we've got McDonald's, there's Pizza Hut, Signal Grill. You know, again, the old business model. You know, bar and machines.

BS: With the Rocky Mountain Labs, you would think that would bring in a different crowd.

TB: Well, it is. Those were local customers, but those are people that are, you know, off on vacation. They're headed to Missoula, you know. They're headed to Bozeman, you know, that sorta thing. I like to think we had a little bit to do with, I mean, we get people from Salmon, [Idaho] or Missoula and in the wintertime, of course from the ski hill. People'd go, "Hey, yeah, there's a brewery in Hamilton." Stop, you know, I think that helped. I had customers come back. "We were here on vacation last summer and stopped in and had a beer and we just bought a piece of property here." You know. So, it was neat. I'm a community guy, you know, and family and all that sorta of thing. So, it felt really good to be [unintelligible] a part of it. I mean, you know we were referred to as the community club house is and not just me, but, you know, all these breweries. Brian at Blackfoot. Everybody. You go and hang out. You can have a fundraiser. You're gonna do this. You're gonna do that. We'll just do it at the brewery. We have, you know, wedding reception dinners and wedding reception ... whatever it is, you know. Historically, that's what breweries have been in our culture as, sure you know. I think we've lost that for some decades. It's really, really great to see it.

BS: Do you get the sense, are you aware of this sort of phenomenon going on in England or Scotland or places like that?

TB: I haven't been ... I have never been there. But I've got some real good friends from [unintelligible] that come and spend time annually. They talk about it. Of course, I watch TV. You know, we hear about these things. One of our brewers left and over the course of time, ended up in Ireland, with a brewery start up. He's a brewer there now. I know it's happening. I know early on, while we were first getting started, you know, the attitude of, you know, the European brewers and breweries is "Oh those Americans, they don't know beers. They can't brew beer like the way we make beer." That's changed. It's changed in a

big way. We just won an international silver medal for our Scottish-style brew. We had [unintelligible] It's the international -- I don't know, I mean, I know there's beer sent from all over the world to [unintelligible] this competition. I don't know if there were Scottish [unintelligible], but yeah, we took the silver medal [unintelligible].

BS: How widely do you distribute your beer within Montana?

TB: Throughout Montana. I think the furthest east is a distributor in Billings. Of course, I don't think we cover Montana one hundred percent. We're not with every distributor. You know, Helena, Bozeman, Great Falls, up the Flathead [Valley]. Did I say Bozeman? So, I mean, we cover all the major There's not a whole lot to the east of Billings.

Of course, Idaho. We've been in Idaho almost since the beginning. Went into eastern Washington, partially having to do with northern Idaho because the distributor for northern Idaho was in Spokane. They're licensed in Washington. Recently, we're approached by a startup. Recent, I say, you know, a year or so ago. A startup in Portland, Oregon. So, we license in Oregon to distribute beer there. We're just starting the groundwork for Seattle and some in Eugene.

BS: 'Cause that's gotta being a really crowded market.

TB: They are. You know, all the markets ... it's just so different from the zero or very little awareness. I mean you could hardly find a Bayern Amber, you know, when I started, you know, anyplace. So, from very little awareness to, you know, they're overwhelmed. This time of the year, you know, things are set. I mean, you don't hardly consider goin' and tryin' to get somebody give you an in someplace. It's like, hey summer's on, ain't changin' nothin'. [laughter] So, to now being overcrowded and staying relevant. That's what our branding brings to the table. Our history, you know, we've been makin' good beer for a long time. Now, if I walk into a distributor [?] and say "Hey, we're gonna do this beer or that beer." We'll take two pallets. Not like it used to be.

BS: Were you the original brewmaster or did you have somebody else doing that?

TB: You know, I actually hired a neighbor. He was a homebrewer. That's how we started. That didn't last very long. We outgrew his skills quickly and I hired a professional brewer.

BS: Where did that person come from?

TB: He came from Idaho. He was with us for about eight years. Did a real good job. Just due to, you know, his family. He had a family when he came here -- just married and then got a couple of kids. His wife was a teacher. Work wasn't good for her when things kinda went south here a few years ago. He got a bigger, better offer, over in Oregon, actually. They moved.

Another brewer ... our head brewer now was a similar guy. He was a homebrewer. In fact, when we were interviewing for that position, he came to the interview with a six-pack of beer. This could be our guy! One of the beers he brought that day is ... has been one of our prime summer beers for a few years now. A ginger American wheat beer. It's really good. Really a tasty beer. Very popular. In fact, were ... that will likely be our next label that we're gonna do, put in a can.

BS: What do you think were the expectations of those early microbrewers and what was the reality of the business?

TB: Philosophically, I'm not an expectation guy. You know, I think that's the downfall of a lot of, you know, you have all these expectations and you can be successful, but not meet your expectations and feel

like a failure. I'm just ... I've always been, you know, keep your nose down and work hard and do the best I can. What you get, you get. That's, you know, we started in 2000 square feet with a bunch of old dairy equipment. You asked how much, I think we opened the doors and were selling growlers for about \$40,000. About \$40,000.

BS: Wow.

TB: Yeah, now I spend \$40,000 like I've got it. You know, oh yeah, we're gonna do this, we're gonna do that. I mean, I just put two new tanks for almost \$50,000. My refrigeration is \$50,000 [unintelligible], you know.

BS: I recently interviewed Max Pigman over at Lewis & Clark [Brewing Company]. He just put out 9 million dollars for that expansion. I mean, sell a hellva lot of beer.

TB: Have you talked to Tim O'Leary yet?

BS: Yeah. Yeah, I did.

TB: Well, his new ... so it's been two or three years ago.

BS: Both of 'em were designed by the same person.

TB: Yeah, I don't know where we were. Someplace, "Hey Tim! How's it going?" He was like, "Big day!" I go, "What's up?" He said, "I just signed on a 14 million loan." So that was the day he signed for starting his new deal up there in Bonner. Yeah, it's big money. It's different than what it was back then. I mean, the original KettleHouse ... I don't know how long you've been around.

BS: About forty-five years.

TB: Okay. You were in the original KettleHouse. I don't know if you were ever down here, but I mean, it was like that. You'd get a tank here and a tank there. My first brewing tank was ... that I still have. Was a little dry [?] tank that Jürgen had out back in his yard. He sold it to me. I don't even remember for how much. Cheap. It had been left outside with liquid in and had froze. Busted a few things. He sold it to me for maybe \$1500. I was like, "How 'bout I give you 500 now." [laughter] We repaired and have repaired it many times since then. It's still back there. It's got beer in it right now. I think it's got a chai stout in it right now.

BS: Do you have any idea how old Jürgen is?

TB: Jürgen is younger than me.

BS: Huh!

TB: By a fair amount.

BS: Huh!

TB: He's ... I think he's at least five years or seven years younger than me. I'm sixty-one.

BS: Huh! You must have got yours as an infant. He started in '85 or something.

TB: He As I recall, have you interviewed Jürgen?

BS: Actually, Anneliese [Warhank], my partner did.

TB: Okay. I believe, from recollection, he came here after completing his school in Bavaria. Came here as an apprentice and I guess did two years under someone else, who was certified to do the apprenticeship and that. He was likely in his early-twenties. Then, of course, bought the brewery. Bought the Bayern Brewery. Him and Jim Lueders, Jim Lueders also does the Wildwood [Brewing].

BS: I interviewed him.

TB: Did you?

BS: He's one of the ... he's actually on our committee. Got a committee of Todd Daniels and Jim Lueders and Steve Lozar.

TB: Steve's great! I love Steve! My daughter, who just left here today, and his daughter, Nicole, were roommates in the dorm their first year of college. Her husband, my son-in-law, owns a chunk of Lewis & Clark Brewery.

BS: All right. Tell me how effective the Montana Brewers Association [MBA] has been?

TB: Montana Brewers Association has grown huge. Done really, really well. Jason [Goeltz], my production manager. I don't know if he's here. I'll check. He can tell you a lot more on that. I joined it as soon as I found out about it. I think Tim O'Leary, of course, who would've told you about it. Because when I first started, of course, you know, couldn't sell a pint of beer. Of course, I didn't get thirty tap handles in the first month and every grocery store didn't take it. I'd walk into a bar with a couple of bottles for samples. They'd go, "You can't bring that in here!" It's like, "No, no. These are samples." "We don't sell that kind of beer in here! Get out." Man, if it wasn't for that passing in '98, I don't know. I'm sure I would've talked to Tim, who told about the [?] association 'cause he was part of that originally. I found out about it just about the same time that was ... legislation was getting done. Fortunate, for me. Since then, of course, you know, part of the association and on the board and then president of the association. While we were still in our infancy. Struggling and not as regular and organized as it is now. Now, it's ... there's, you know, a lot of people a lot smarter than me.

BS: You folks have a lobbyist then?

TB: Yes.

BS: Who's that?

TB: I don't know. It's a firm out of Helena that we give lots of money to every year, legislative year or not. No Sadie. She's a puppy. My daughter ... one of my other daughters just rescued her. She's in office training. Aren't you? She's doin' pretty good.

Let me see if Jason's here 'cause he's been on the board five, six years now.

Built originally as ... Marcus Daley built it. He had a racetrack here. That was his grandstand. Then, at some point, I have a copy of the document signed by John and his wife Rose Hamilton. Deeding this property in 1891 to Associated Seed Company of New Haven, Connecticut. They turned the building, put it on a foundation and closed it in and it became a seed processing plant. Then, this building we found through construction and deconstruction. I found a board that was signed 1931. This was the ... from the railroad logs. It just says apple house. When apples were booming here in the Bitterroot, this is apparently where the apples came and got loaded. We had a rail spur that came right up to the door here. We bought it in 2000, the whole thing. It was dilapidated to say the least. This building had two light bulbs in it. That

was the extent of the electrical up here. The building next door was full of pigeons. We actually sold the whole property to a developer, who condoed it. Built it out. This is my daughter Sara.

Sara Bozik: Hello!

TB: This is Brian.

SB: Hello. Nice to meet you.

TB: He condoed it. Did all the initial buildout. Then, I bought this portion back. It's a condo association. It's just under an acre. I lease this eastern, er the western side is railroad property that I lease for about five foot off the building out around for parking. Hey honey! Sara!

SB: Yeah?

TB: She's eating a bottle cap.

SB: I know. I didn't want to disturb you guys.

TB: No, no. It's fine. We're just

SB: She's a puppy.

TB: [Talking to Sadie the puppy] You okay there? You can't eat bottle caps. They're not good for you. Better learn now. [Talking to Brian] I'm sorry. Where were we?

BS: Let's see, oh we were talkin' about

TB: You asked about me irrigation. At some point, the Bitterroot Irrigation District had offices in the three-story building. There was a small, older metal building in the back here that was their vehicle maintenance building. We had a grease pit and everything. When I looked for a location to do this, I needed a floor drain. Naïve as I was at the time, there was a floor drain there, which turned out to be nothing more than a French drain. That lasted for about a year before it started becoming a problem. But anyway, there was a floor drain and I needed a floor drain. That's why I ended up here. The guy who owned the property, at the time, when it was taken, he struck me a really good deal on renting me the building for \$500 bucks a month or something. I cleaned it up and painted it. Started bringing in old dairy equipment. One thing led to another. Next thing you know, we're here.

BS: Do you know anything about the logistics of getting that law passed to allow the sale of beer in brew pubs?

TB: Some, but I wasn't part of it. Tim O'Leary and Dennis Himmelberger who's in Billings, a brewer over there. I think maybe John and Sandy [Campbell] from Lang [Creek Brewery] might've been involved. I don't recall, but Tim was there. He was part of it. He can tell you all about that. They negotiated, of course, with the Tavern Association.

BS: Ever meet Mark Staples?

TB: Yes, I knew Mark Staples. Mark Staples was part of that. You talk to Mark? He's out of it now.

BS: I've been trying to. Apparently, he's had a stroke.

TB: Oh no! I didn't know that.

BS: Somebody told me, that's he's still, you know, could talk and he hasn't been returning my calls.

TB: Oh no.

BS: I don't know how long ago that was.

TB: Huh.

BS: That's what I understand. Anyway, I had a great interview with Hal Harper, who one was the one that introduced the bill in '99 that finally passed. His story, his father's a Methodist minister in Helena. He was very -- his passion in life was anti-gambling. He saw what was happening in the local taverns around the state, with all the gaming machines, big screen TVs and sports and stuff. His opinion, the tavern was no longer a place where people would go to socialize and converse and such.

TB: Yeah, that's true.

BS: He talked his son Hal, who was in the Legislature, into introducing this bill.

TB: I'll be darned. I've never heard that story. That's very interesting. I do remember Hal Harper.

BS: Todd Daniels, who I interviewed, who was early on involved with Kessler.

TB: Right. Right.

BS: He's an engineer.

TB: Kessler and then, of course, Sleeping Giant.

BS: Todd told me that the way he engineered this whole thing was meeting Mark Staples for beers at the Rialto Bar in Helena. He said they finally mapped out the whole strategy on a bar napkin.

TB: Yep, that sounds about right. That sounds like Todd. Wow! Yeah. It's interesting.

BS: I was interested to know, to do you think the new 60,000-barrel limit will be sufficient to allow growth in the brewery industry in Montana?

TB: You know, I mean the reality is that the industry has grown significantly. I just looked on the website last night, and it says that there are fifty-three licensed breweries in the state. I thought the number was much higher.

BS: I've heard seventy-two. Then, this morning, the other Tim from Worden's said there were sixty-eight or something. Yeah, I don't know.

TB: The Brewers Association website may not have been updated in the last couple months, the way things are growing, but that says fifty-three. I thought there were close to eighty. Where I got that number, I don't know. You know, peer sight [?].

BS: I think it seemed like maybe Big Sky was over 50,000 [barrels] at this point.

TB: They are right there. I think I asked Jason the other day, who's just pulling in. I think he told me 48,000. Jason's been on the Board of the Brewers Association these past few years. He's ... I've got this little philosophy in life, when people ... what you do for a living, I'm an employer. I do my best to hire people smarter than me. He's way smarter than me. He's been on the board and a real major factor in, you know, what's goin' on with the Association and the lobbying these last five, six years, something like that.

BS: I thought, maybe, that Big Sky had some kinda liquor license 'cause I think they weren't even too concerned about the limit, you know, tap room?

TB: Big Sky's business model has always been being a big wholesale, manufacturer. They don't want to get, you know, interfere in any way, you know, with their primary business partner, you know. They've always and I thought maybe that was changing ... opted out of the retail other than selling growlers to go.

Yeah, so I don't know. I mean, for us, yeah, it's not an issue. The 10,000 barrels wasn't an issue for us because, you know, unless we build another facility, which I'm not getting any younger, I have no intention of building another facility. Jason [Goeltz] might. My daughter Nicol [Musbarger], who runs, [unintelligible] now, may. It's not an issue for me, but it is for Tim and it is for the guys ... I mean, it has been for Jürgen at Bayern. He stops his production at, you know, 9,999 barrels because he don't want to lose his taproom. Tim at KettleHouse, I mean, he pulled out of markets because of the 10,000-barrel limit. I think it's great. I think it's great that they got that done. That's also speaks to our association and the political wherewithal that we have now and working with our partners. I mean that was done first the tavern association and the wholesalers. You know, we got that one through. We've also supported a lot of stuff for them and we've helped not support stuff for them. It's been ... I think yeah, I think all in all, it's a good thing. It's a really good thing.

BS: Are there any changes in the law regarding micros that you'd like to see?

TB: Well, I mean, you know, I'd love to be able to open until ten o'clock in the summertime. To be a bar, no. Would it be nice if, you know, if I could let people their own bottle of wine in? You know, because not everybody drinks beer. You know, we've been through it. I've been through it. I've stood in front of so many committees, you know, was on the board for a lotta years. You know, unless the State wants to take on decide, you know, rework the whole alcohol licensing scenario in the state, I think we've got a good thing going.

BS: Right.

TB: Yeah, I've fought the battle, you know, for more hours. You know, take down the barrier between the three-tier system so I that I could buy a license. Yeah, it'd be nice to see some change at some point. I'm sure at some point it will come.

BS: Is the forty-eight ounce limit a problem?

TB: Forty-eight ounces has rarely, ever been an issue for us. You know, folks are, of course more aware, as we know, for the type of product that we produce, it's not about comin' in and drinking as much as you can. You know, it's a different industry. Very rarely. I mean, every now and then we got somebody who's like, "This is bullshit. If I'm gonna have another beer, I can have another beer." I, you know, "I'm sorry but you can't have another beer here. You know, you can go across the street."

BS: Do you keep track?

TB: Absolutely. Absolutely. Always have.

BS: Because I've been in some micros where don't seem to being doing that. They're very careful about it at Blackfoot, I know.

TB: A lot of them, I shouldn't say a lot of them, but we have heard and there have been some incidents, you know, in the industry over the years, of ones that say nobody's checking. You know, what do I care? Obviously, not in the spirit of, you know, of what we had negotiated. Or what Tim, Dennis and Hal put

together. No, that's not But, to be open, just in the summertime. I mean, you know, it's light to, like ... people are gettin' off the river at nine o'clock. I'd love to be able to sell 'em a burger and a glass of beer. So, you know, we've tried that from all different angles, you know, as an association and the smaller, newer brewers still are beatin' that drum. They just don't all know they haven't been through the experience we have as far as all the discussions and all the history and why it ain't gonna work. It's not gonna happen. They don't know. Not that it won't someday.

We thought we had a pretty good plan a few years ago when we were trying to do that shift. Instead of ten o'clock to eight o'clock, how about noon until ten o'clock. We're not asking for anymore. We're just asking to shift it a little bit. Unfortunately, that didn't go. It was looking good there for a while.

BS: Do you think the laws are less restrictive, like, in Washington and Oregon?

TB: You know, I don't know what their ... I know with Idaho, they're really not restrictive. I know in Washington, my understanding is, you walk into a state building, whatever, and you fill out the form and you write a check for 500 bucks and you walk out with a license. How that pertains to brewers, I don't know. I've been in Washington, in breweries that ... I also get ... I don't know exactly how it works in other states. I know some states are more restrictive.

BS: Right.

TB: I can recall

BS: Like Utah.

TB: Utah. Absolutely!

BS: You can't serve from a tap anything more than three percent.

TB: Yep. Yep.

BS: I mean, you can buy a bottle of beer that's more than that. I don't get it.

TB: One of my early experiences in Utah -- I used to go there and ski with some buddies. On our first trip up there, so this must've been about the early-eighties -- the grocery store they had the 3.2 beer 3.2 percent. Oh! If you want anything stronger than that, you gotta go to the liquor store. So, I go to the liquor store. I don't know what it was? Fosters or who knows. I was gonna get a case. We were gonna be there a week. They had a sticker on each bottle. I go, "So, how much is this, you know, if you buy it by the case?" They went, "Well it's \$1.84 times 24." I said, "Are you kidding me?" "Nope." That's the way it was. I mean, at that time, you could buy a twelve pack of, you know, whatever -- Fosters -- for \$8.00, in Phoenix, at the grocery store.

We walked in and we wanted to watch football games. We walked into a bar. We walk in and sit down and someone hollers from across the bar, "You guys members?" "Members?" They just holler, "Hey Joe, you wanna sponsor these guys?" "All right." We each had to fill out a form and pay five dollars. Then, Joe had to put his x [laughter] and then we ordered, you know, a pitcher of beer and some burgers. The beer was flat and warm. The burgers were mediocre. The TV was terrible. [laughter] Yeah, Utah it's bad. Idaho. Washington. I don't know what Oregon

BS: California?

TB: I'm tryin' to think it was ... probably was California, but I know Florida was like this. I don't know if it's changed or not. You could be a brew pub, or you could be a production brewery, but you couldn't

be both. No retail on-premise, period. Samples was even a grey area. Can I have a little taste of this or taste of that? I know there are some states that are more restrictive.

My best friend, that I grew up with, settled in Florida. Went for his fiftieth. Before I went, I, you know, made some calls, I wanted to surprise him. I wanted to give him, you know, him a keg of beer. His wife was throwing a big surprise party. Holy moly! I mean, you can buy a keg of Budweiser at the liquor store, but if you wanted anything else. After talking to a few brewers, you know, I was able to, you know, sneak a five gallon keg out the back door of someplace. I had to borrow a tap from one of the other ones so they weren't both coming from the same place. Couldn't even fill a growler. One of the guys took me in back and said, "Yeah you should have a sample of this for your analysis, you know." He filled me a growler out of a tank. Yeah, we're fortunate in a lot of ways. Things could always change. There's a number of folks, I mean, Tim would be one of them, where's he's got the license downtown. I know up at Tamarack [Brewing Company] -- I don't know if you've been up there -- up in Lakeside, they've got a license there. There's a few of 'em around. Montana Brewing in Billings. I don't know how many now. It could be done, but it's difficult. We had a hard look at here about a year ago. We had an opportunity for a license. It was just ... it just wouldn't work for us.

BS: What would it have cost you?

TB: The cost was good. I don't recall exactly now, but you know, \$110,000 I think. My daughter was eying it. But we couldn't make the legalities work because of the separation of the premises. I would have either to give up the real estate or the brewery or both. The brewery cannot rent to the retailer. The retailer can rent to the brewery. This goes back to Prohibition. Wholesaler manufacturer cannot have any control over the retailer.

BS: Do you think there's room for additional breweries in the Bitterroot?

TB: There's plenty of real estate out there. I think like any business, you know, I would say do your homework. Check your demographics, you know. Go around and talk to folks. I would say that we're rarely, ever in a situation where we're so darn busy, you know, that we can't take care, you know, the folks that want to buy the beer. Like I mentioned with the business model, the liquor license -- the all beverage license. The business model changing, there's more options now. You know where Sheriff and Porters is, Kodiak Jax, you know, they got a license. They've got pizza. They've got sandwiches. They've got eighteen beers on tap. I think they've got liquor also. Nap's Burgers. It's been here forever.

BS: I had lunch there.

TB: Today? Yeah, good burgers. Do you know about their new place?

BS: No.

TB: They bought this place right on the corner over here. You can see the construction from here. I think they're supposed to open here soon. I think I might've heard this weekend or next weekend or something. They got a license, and they got food. They're gonna have some booze and beers. I'm not sure if they have all beverage or not. They're taking these old licenses and doing something with them. Do you need to have all the brewing equipment to have a business[?]. That's a huge, huge investment. I would answer[?] no. I mean, I know we have it written down someplace, how much money I've got back there[?]. Do you need that to have a successful business? Get a license? Cook some food and put a bunch of beers on tap and [unintelligible] we need more breweries. Is there room for it? There's plenty of real estate out there. Is there a need, a demand? I would do research.

BS: What's the population of Hamilton?

TB: I think the population, because the city limits are [unintelligible]. It's been pretty stable over all the years. I think it's in the 4,000 range. But the population of the [Bitterroot] valley, from when I came here, and I was on the chamber board, I was president of the chamber, has grown significantly. I don't even know what current figures are. I'm gonna leave it back in my brain now. They were ... I want to say the Hamilton metro area is in the 10-12,000 range and the valley must be close to 50,000, maybe. Something like that. If you like those figures, I can throw a rock at that window there. Get somebody to poke their head out and they'll yell at us.

BS: How important is the industry to the Montana economy?

TB: I think it's had a huge impact. In fact, based on that, I actually got on the website and looked up a few figures. When I was on the Board, we actually did the first info card that says do you know how many employees we got, how much money and all that. I just looked. I think I ... for Hey Jason! I know he's in the back. He must be in the brewery. You can talk to him about the politics. This figure is low 'cause the website says that the industry, in general, contributes about \$100,000 to charity each year.

BS: Right.

TB: I know it's gotta be way more than that because I think we're ... we do a lot of fundraisers here. Of course, the money they walk out with ... you know, I hear \$3000, \$5000, \$8000 that they raise here. Then, we contribute like 50 cents from every beer for that event. We do at least one event a month. Even at \$5000 ... even at \$3000 plus our 50 -- that's \$40,000 right there. That's just me. I know we're all of the same mindset for doing fundraisers and contributing, you know, cheap beer or a keg of beer donated to somebody's fundraiser. Land Trust. Habitat for Humanity. There's so many of them that we have a complete program for donating to non-profits. I'm sure you've probably been on the website and looked at the figures.

The website also says that we contribute sixty million dollars annually to the Montana economy. Over 500 employees. These are, I think, 2016 numbers. Then, over four million pounds of Montana grain. I don't know if that's just based on it was Malt Montana. No it wasn't Malt Montana?-- that was another one that's trying to start up. I don't know if that just based on Malteurop 'cause obviously a lot of our grain is exported. Great Western Malting out of Idaho is a huge supplier for us and for ... they were the supplier before Malteurop for a [unintelligible].

BS: Apparently, they're talking about a malting facility in Butte?

TB: Oh really?

BS: Have you heard that? Yeah.

TB: No, I haven't heard about that. I haven't heard about that. Interesting.

BS: The guy who owns the M and M and I think the Metals Bank Building and condos. His name is [Ron] Ueland He's a mover and shaker in Butte. He's the guy that's proposing that.

TB: Nice.

BS: Yeah.

TB: It would be, I mean, one of the things and of course, Malteurop, they're so big to do specialty malts, you know. I mean, that would be That would be really nice. [unintelligible] makes all over specialty malts. A lot of the facilities, so that would be cool.

It's a huge impact. It's a huge impact, you know. Who can say what the impact is on the tourism, you know. I mean, I'm going any place on vacation, I wanna make sure there's a brewery there or there's someplace else I can go. 'Cause I know I'm gonna get a good beer and decent food and wanna be able to be comfortable, you know. Yeah, I think it's huge. It's huge.

BS: How important are microbreweries to the social fabric of communities?

TB: I think in a lot of respects, they are the social fabric and not just communities, but to our human culture for as long as it's been recorded, you know. It's a place. It's the community club house. I mean, it's, you know, you bring your family. You got a little music, a little food, a little beer and everybody's friendly. There's no ... we've got, you know, Chuck Schwab and the local pig farmer and the judge and the chief of police, you know, all sittin' at the bar, having a beer, and, you know, shootin' the shit. You know, there's no ... I think it's hugely important. You could take this model, and get it out there a little more and things would be a little different. Have a beer. Relax.

BS: In my mind, I think the whole industry is one of the most positive things that's happened in Montana in ten years. I mean, I can't think of anything better, really.

TB: Yeah, where everybody can come together. I mean, in the ... it would be nineteen years this year that were licensed, in this fall. Only called the cops a couple of times, in all that time, you know. How often cops get called to any corner bar, you know, on a monthly basis. I made some comments during a big interview for our ten-year anniversary and talked about some of that. Man, I lost a lot of customers. Lot of retail customers over it. It's not ... but there's a difference in impact on our communities and all that stuff. And this news business model ... a lot of them are turning to now. It's better. It's not how much can I drink in a day. Bust a pool cue over, "I saw you talk to my woman!" It's like, yeah. It's an excuse. If I sit here or whatever. C'mere Yeah, I think it's huge. I think it's ... I know it seems so much as a recent phenomenon, but it's not. It's just went a way for some decades and now we found our way back to it. It's great.

BS: That's all I have. Is there anything else you want to add?

TB: I was just kinda curious as to what all, you know, what are you putting together?

BS: The plan is to put all these ... they're ... all the tapes are being transcribed. It'll all be up at our website at the Montana Historical Society. I think the actual tapes and the transcriptions, people will be able to look.

TB: Do I get to edit any of that? I've gotten in trouble before. Can't keep my mouth shut. More than once. Sometimes on a regular basis. Not even being political about it, just it is what is. I don't think I've said anything too bad. Yeah. That's good.

BS: Anneliese [Warhank] who wrote the grant for this one, is hoping to do a follow along. Maybe we can pick up some of the more recent breweries. I think this kinda ends in 2004, something like that. There's certainly been a lot that's happened since 2004

TB: Yeah.

BS: Yeah. There's a brewery in Wibaux. There's one in Wolf Point, which I think is owned and run by the mayor or something like that. I've heard.

TB: In Wolf Point?

BS: That's out by Glasgow. It's on the Indian reservation, I think.

TB: I was thinking of Wolf Creek over near Helena. The one in Darby, after the guy finally got it up and did all the politics and hoops he had to jump through, the mayoral election came up. He ran for mayor and won. That's kinda cool.

BS: What's that one called again?

TB: Bandit.

BS: Bandit.

TB: Bandit Brewery. They do a good job. Cool little place.

BS: Really?

TB: Yeah, yeah. Good beers.

BS: Well all right.

TB: Do you wanna talk to Jason?

BS: Let's see, begin with how effective do you think the Montana Brewer's Association has been over the years?

Jason Goeltz: My involvement with the Brewer's Association has been about the last eight years. I've been a board member for about 6 ½ of those. I think relative to its effectiveness within the brewing community, I think twofold -- I think it's been very effective within the brewing community. Just amongst the brewing brethren here in the state. I think outward facing within the rest of the industry. Relative to its political capital, I think it's been quite successful.

You're probably familiar with the legislative successes that we've had. Anywhere from, you know, clarifying 8 PM being the time at which we need to stop serving, however, we're allowed ... patrons are welcome to stay until 9 PM. We can have beers on the table that were purchased before 8 until 9. Really clarifying what growler -- the definition of a growler and also, making that opportunity available to the Tavern Association, as well as retaining the privileges that we were ... that we successfully lobbied for in '99. You know, in a lot of states, privileges have been removed from the craft brewing industry. I think there's a success story just in retaining the privileges that we've had, you know. One of the things that Gary Fish from Deschutes [Brewery] said long ago, was relative to guilds, is that our strength is in our togetherness, not in our agreement. Naturally, with any association, we have a lot of different models and were not always unanimously aligned. However, we've done a very good job of remaining together despite differences in business models.

BS: Great. How many members? Do you know?

JG: I don't know, offhand, how many members we have. I mean, it's something I can follow up with you, if you'd like.

BS: Do you know how many breweries there are currently in Montana?

JG: I believe we are upwards of seventy breweries in planning and open.

TB: The website says -- what did I tell you?

BS: Fifty-three.

TB: It says fifty-three. The Brewers Association website says licensed breweries in Montana is fifty-three.

JG: Yeah. I don't think that correct. I don't think that's correct, which is another thing, if you'd like me to follow up with you, with that magic number.

BS: With this most recent law 60,000-barrel limit, was there pushback from the Tavern Association for that?

JG: Yes. Yes, there was. Yes and no. You know, I think of the, you know, in a lot of instances where the retailers guild ... the Tavern Association has pushed back. It's somewhat of a knee jerk reaction, to protect their interested, their assets. Which makes sense. We do the same thing. Often, there's a lack of understanding of our industry. When we present something at times, the first reaction, if it is opposition, it's due to a lack of maybe understanding. Our relationship with the Tavern Association has improved immensely over the years. There are more open channels of communication then there used to be. I think throughout this legislative session, we were able to take advantage of those lines of communication and clarify what it was we were looking for. At the ... by the end of this session, the Tavern Association was not opposing the bill.

BS: Were you over there lobbying yourself?

JG: I made it over, yes to lobby, along with many, many other breweries. Then, of course, our executive director, Matt Leow. Have you had the chance to speak with him?

TB: That's one of the questions. I didn't know the name of the firm.

JG: M and R is ... it's a national, kinda ... it's a national lobbying entity. Matt Leow and his contact information is on the Montana Brewers Association website. He would be a fantastic resource.

TB: Yeah.

JG: Especially when it comes to the more recent events that've taken place in the Legislature.

BS: This project is focused on the early days, basically from like, 1983 to, I think, 2004 is when it ends.

JG: Sure.

BS: We're hoping to do a follow along grant. To bring it up to the present,

JG: Right, right. Tim was involved with the Brewers Association board in those early years. I don't know. We're you on the board in '99?

TB: No.

JG: I didn't think so.

TB: Not in '99.

JG: Brad. Brad.

TB: Brad Robinson.

JG: Tim O’Leary, probably. Sam Hoffman.

TB: No, I don’t think Sam was.

JG: Mark Hastings?

TB: Yeah, maybe or Tom.

JG: Scott.

TB: Todd Daniels.

JG: Mark Daniels, yeah.

TB: Todd Scott got involved.

JG: I thought Mark Hastings was involved back then when he was with the Montana Brewing Company during the infamous deal of ’99.

TB: Yeah, that was one of the questions I didn’t really know. I told him to ask Tim O’Leary.

JG: Tim O’Leary would definitely know. Who else have you met with?

BS: I interviewed Tim O’Leary. I’ve interviewed Bjorn at Big Sky, Max Pigman at Lewis & Clark. Todd Daniels, Jim Laeders. Who else have I got? I did the guy, Brad, who runs The Rhino.

JG: Brad Martens. Yep.

BS: This morning I did Tim France at Worden’s.

JG: Worden’s. Great guy! Great guy! Yeah.

BS: Yeah, it’s been great.

JG: Yeah, yeah. We have ... we’re rich with history in a very, very few of the founding brewers have vacated the industry. You’re, you know, rich with current and historical information for it, which is great.

BS: What’s your last name?

JG: Goeltz. G-O-E-L-T-Z.

BS: Very good. That pretty much covers it. Do you think the new 60,000-barrel limit will be sufficient to allow growth for the industry in Montana?

JG: We’ll see. You know, I mean, Big Sky Brewing is already kinda knocking on that door.

TB: Did you tell me 48 the other day?

JG: I think they’re at 48,000 barrels. You know, let Bjorn, you know, let him quote you on his current production versus I don’t want to get in trouble.

TB: The other thing that comes to mind with that, is the way the industry has grown so much. You know, our, you know, we just came from the association meeting in Washington D.C.

BS: Oh really!

TB: A couple of weeks ago. They said, you know, forget about, I mean, we've seen double digit growth for so many years. It's like, you know, you forget about it.

BG: We can break even or at least not suffer much of a loss, you know. You know, we're doin' all right, you know. You know, but, you know, I guess back to that question. You know, it's not a simple answer. There's a lot of other legislative efforts that could come to fruition between now and then and nearly nullify that barrelage limit, you know. I mean, you know, the 10,000-barrel limit certainly didn't dictate that you could only produce 10,000 barrels. You know, however, the reason most any brewery could get to 10,000 barrels with the exception of Big Sky because they were out day one, is by virtue of having the tasting room to help accommodate the equipment purchases and build the infrastructure that's required to produce that much product. You know, 60,000 barrels is a lot of beer. But '99, everybody, including our own industry, thought 10,000 barrels was a lot of beer.

TB: It was!

BG: And it was! It was! You know, we just need to be careful in thinking that any legislation can stand the test of time.

TB: You know, you just spoke with Max. The new facility he's building, is a 100,000-barrel facility. Tim, what he just built, I think is another neck of the wood. Big Sky, I mean, you've been into Big Sky. If you got the time, I'd love to show you.

BS: Oh yeah!

TB: So, you can see. The scale, I mean, for me to look at a brewery like this twenty years ago, was like ... you know. MY God! I can't even begin to.

BG: We don't have enough space now. We're maximized.

TB: Still, you look out here. You just think oh my God, you know, we can maybe do bulk ... Maybe we can maybe with the centrifuge we can maybe knock on the 10,000-barrel door. I mean, look out there, Jesus, there's a lot of stuff here. You know, Big Sky, I don't know what their capacity is.

BG: Yeah, I'm not sure exactly what their production capacity is. I think, I would like to think, that they're in the 75 to 100,000 barrel a year capacity.

TB: But then you got Max. I mean, he's building a facility to make 100,000 barrels. Which he's got a license at 60,000 barrels doesn't affect him. But yes, the times, they are a changin'. With the explosion of the industry, it's gonna be pretty hard, you know, I mean, we're talkin' about Big Sky needs twenty percent growth to hit that 60,000 barrels. We're talkin' about three percent in a year, I mean there's a lot of years before we got

BS: What I find amazing is that nationally, there's only 5000 micros. It's only five percent of the market.

BG: Right. Right. There's plenty of opportunity out there. You know, but it becomes increasingly difficult in the land of distributor consolidation. By distribute ... by wholesalers that are controlled by larger breweries that have larger brands. We're very lucky here in Montana. The large, you know, InBev or SAB Miller Coors distributors are very craft-friendly. We are very lucky in this state, you know. We, you know, really from coast to coast, you know, border to border, you know, those larger distributors are very craft forward. I think we owe a lot to them.

TB: And they worked. There was a time that A-B [Anheuser-Busch] took the stance, we will do everything that we ... I mean, publicly, verbally to, you know, to pushback on this micro industry. Our distributor in Salmon, was the Coors distributor and the Budweiser distributor took care of this area, told the Budweiser distributor you will take everything out of your house that is not Anheuser-Busch, or you will lose your distributorship. That's when vendor just blew up because all the sudden, I mean, they had us and then all the sudden, they got all these other brands.

BG: Sure. Sure.

TB: Yeah, they really took it hard and long on that. But yeah, now that I joined the party so to speak.

BG: Really, we owe a lot to the consumers for that. For going out and really ...

TB: Yeah.

BG: ... just shy of demanding that local product ... that craft product.

BS: All right. I don't have any further questions.

BG: Thank you for making the time.

BS: Sure.

TB: Thank you for including us.

[recording ends]